

SECURE TRANSPORTATION FOR  
AMERICA ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 1, 2001*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3150) to improve aviation security, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3150, the Secure Transportation Security Enhancement Act of 2001. Mr. Chairman, this legislation is a misguided attempt to provide security for our nation's airport system. This legislation continues to rely on federal oversight of airport security rather than taking the additional steps to make airport security a federal responsibility. Therefore, H.R. 3150 does not meet the stringent test needed for adequately protecting the public.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 3150 is about seven weeks late in making its way to the floor of the House of Representatives. We all realize that patience will be required in our current war against terrorism. This will be a long journey. Nevertheless, this Congress must be diligent to put forth timely legislation that will protect the public and sustain our economy. Although I am pleased that we are voting on this measure today, I am disappointed that H.R. 3150 does not address the security needs of our nation's airports.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support the Oberstar Amendment which will be offered in the nature of a substitute. The Oberstar Amendment incorporates the text of S. 1447, as passed by the Senate.

The Oberstar substitute contains a number of provisions that would significantly improve airport security.

First, under the Oberstar substitute, FAA is directed to develop a program leading to 100 percent screening of checked baggage. While this program is being developed, FAA is required to make increased use of positive passenger bag match.

Secondly, the Oberstar substitute mandates cockpit doors and locks that cannot be opened by anyone other than the flight crew, with no in-flight access, except for entrance and exit by members of the flight deck crew.

Thirdly, the Oberstar substitute authorizes the Department of Transportation to place Air Marshals on all aircraft. Finally, this substitute provides anti-hijack training for flight crews.

Mr. Chairman, the Oberstar substitute would require Under Secretary of Transportation for Security to develop a personnel system for airport screeners employed by the Transportation Security Administration. When fully implemented, these screeners will be equipped with the equipment and skills to protect the public. These screeners, Mr. Chairman, will be paid well and directly accountable to the Under Secretary for Transportation. I believe that this provision is a balanced approach to meet airport security concerns because the Secretary would be able to hold the employees accountable for their service and work product.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 3150 does not take this approach. In fact, H.R. 3150 does nothing to

make Americans feel safe to fly again, even though 82 percent of the American public favors a system where federal security screening personnel are employees of the Transportation Security Administration. I was recently on a flight that had only 16 passengers. After the September 11th terrorist attacks on America, Americans have grave concerns about the safety of airline travel.

While Argenbright Security Inc. says it followed regulations for screening the hijacked flights, aviation experts say the company is part of a system badly in need of a more fundamental fixing—a system where the work goes to the low bidder, not to the company with the most experience.

H.R. 3150 perpetuates the problems of the current airport security system whereby the bottom line is money rather than security. This system leaves traveler's safety to a system of screeners who are paid less than fast-food restaurant workers, and who leave the job as fast as they come. This market-oriented federal supervision of airport security must come to an end. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, the future of airport security lies in Biometrics—a method of measuring a person's physical characteristics such as fingerprint patterns or the geometry of the hand or face. I am confident that screeners, under the current system, will not be properly trained to handle advanced technologies such as Biometrics.

Mr. Chairman, we still have considerable unfinished legislative business to conduct as a result of the September 11th attack on America. We need to move quickly to provide extended unemployment and health insurance benefits to more than 100,000 airline industry employees who have lost their jobs.

Mr. Chairman, we need to pass the Hastings legislation that would include the extension of unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to 78 weeks. Also, the Hastings legislation would extend job training benefits from 26 weeks to 78 weeks, and provides up to 78 weeks of federally subsidized COBRA premiums.

Also, we need to pass H. Con. Res. 228 because the children who lost a parent as a result of the attack on America are in need of services such as foster care assistance, adoption assistance, medical, nutritional and psychological care.

The children of these families may have developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of experiencing or witnessing the horrific deaths caused by these tragic events.

This resolution prioritizes the delivery of such federal services already available under current law. To expedite the fastest possible delivery, this resolution expresses the sense of Congress urging the head of each Federal agency responsible to put the highest possible priority on delivery, and to the maximum extent possible, to do so within 60 days of the date of the determination of the death of the child's parent or guardian.

Also, Mr. Chairman, we need to pass legislation to protect our homeland from terrorist attacks. As a member of the Homeland Security Task Force and Vice-Chair of the Domestic Law Enforcement Working Group, I helped develop a legislative initiative entitled "The Bio-terrorism Protection Act of 2001" (BioP Act). We need to bring this legislation to the floor as

soon as possible so that we can ensure Americans that this country is serious about every aspect of our safety.

## SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, November 6, 2001 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

## MEETINGS SCHEDULED

## NOVEMBER 7

8:30 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Business meeting to markup S. 1628, to strengthen the safety net for agricultural producers, to enhance resource conservation and rural development, to provide for farm credit, agricultural research, nutrition, and related programs, to ensure consumers abundant food and fiber.

SR-328A

10 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings on the nomination of Joe L. Heaton, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, the nomination of Clay D. Land, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Georgia, the nomination of Frederick J. Martone, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona, the nomination of Danny C. Reeves, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky, the nomination of Julie A. Robinson, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas; and the nomination of James Edward Rogan, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

SD-226

2 p.m.

Judiciary

Antitrust, Business Rights, and Competition Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine international aviation alliances, focusing on market turmoil and the future of airline competition.

SD-226